

to a well-known general officer in his service he exclaimed (like Megret on the death of Charles XII. at Friederickstadt), "*Voila la piece finie.*" Others pretended that having charged" several times at the head of the Guard he had been dismounted and made prisoner. The same uncertainty prevailed respecting the fate of Marshal ISTey, the Major-General (Soult), and most of the French generals and chiefs.

Others again affirmed that they had seen Napoleon pass, escaping alone through the disordered crowd, and that they had recognized him by his gray great-coat and dapple-colored horse. This last account was the true one. In his flight, he threw himself into an orchard adjoining the farm of La Belle Alliance. It was there he was met by two French horse-soldiers, who, like himself, had lost their way, but who now undertook to guide and protect him through the parties of Prussians, who, fortunately for him, were so busy in plundering the camp equipages that they let him pass. In spite of the darkness of night he was perceived and recognized in several places, and his presence was made manifest by the remarks of the soldiers, who said to one another in a low tone of voice, "There is the Emperor!" "There goes the Emperor!" These words appeared to him a cry of alarm, and each time he was thus discovered, he galloped forward as quickly as the crowded state of the roads would permit. What had now become of those rapturous acclamations that used to accompany him whenever he showed himself in the midst of his army?

At a short distance from Charleroi two roads meet: one leads to Avesnes, the other to Philippeville: the Emperor chose the latter, and increasing his speed as the roads became clearer, and he could obtain a carriage and post-horses, he abandoned his army without making any effort to rally it. He has been censured for this; but we would remark that French soldiers with all their excellent qualities, are not good at-rallying after a signal defeat, and that his army was so completely cut up and dispersed, so thoroughly disheartened, that every effort to re-form them on the spot must have failed. In their blind panic, groups of these heroes